

BRIAN FISCHER'S ANTS EVERYWHERE: DIVERSE, INVISIBLE



Come to our Visitor Center on **March 30, at 5pm**, and you will meet a scientist with non-stop curiosity who's identified 1000 new species of Formicidae, mostly in the protected area of Madagascar, but who still enjoys learning about our local ants: **Dr. Brian Fisher**.

As a boy, Brian knew he wanted to work outdoors, in nature. Majoring in Biology at the U. of Iowa, he intended to study **tropical plants**, but while doing field work in the rainforest of Panama, as **insects** showered down on him from above, the "love bug bit", the diversity of insects in that tropical world pulled him into their sphere. Now the demise of many species in the variety-basket that is Madagascar explains why Brian says, "Save an ant, save a planet"; there, especially, he's learned ants are the glue that holds forests together.

Dr. Fisher is presently the curator of entomology at the Cal Academy of Sciences & adjunct professor at SFSU and UC Berkeley. He has established the Madagascar Biodiversity Center, has



trained dozens of international graduate students in modern systematics & biodiversity methods, so they can use ants to track biodiversity across the globe, has written over 130 peer-reviewed articles, & so much more. (At left: one of Brian's favorites, the

Trap-jaw ant.)

WILDMIND PRESENTS CALIFORNIA CRITTERS, LIVE! **FOR OUR FAVORITE YOUNGSTERS on APRIL 18**

On **April 18th at 1pm**, at our Visitor Center, you and the children can see **Tahoe**, a **grey fox**, & 4 more lively fellas: an **opossum**, a **Red-tailed Hawk**, a **porcupine**, and a **Turkey Vulture**, while learning about their role, their niche in their ecosystem & community. You will appreciate how these animals were not plucked from some normal existence in the wild, but were doomed to die an imminent death if they had not been adopted by some smart & caring humans at Wildmind. (Wildmind photos)



These folks of Half Moon Bay have been nurturing these rescues, loving them, enjoying them, and learning from them: Tahoe likes to roll around in pungent smells; **Taborri**, a **Red-tailed Hawk**, will only play with lime-green toys & due to a broken wing, exercises by walking around with employees. Don't miss all the action!



TODD BRAJE: TRACKING HOMO SAPIENS' PATH TO A NEW WORLD on March 16

On the evening of **March 16, at 5pm**, **Dr. Todd Braje** will present a program that will help explain how the **first Americans** settled in the "New World". Today, there are more questions than answers about the origins of these intrepid humans, a situation that has stimulated new ideas and reinvigorated theories once considered marginal.



Answers might be found along our Pacific shorelines, where the floral & faunal giants of California such as **kelp forests & sea mammals** may have facilitated the peopling of the Americas. Research being conducted at the Cal Academy is working on these questions by looking under the sea in the largest scientific effort ever undertaken to identify submerged archaeological sites along California's Pacific Coast, sites that were above sea level during the time of the Bering Land Bridge.

Dr. Todd Braje is an anthropological archaeologist, associate professor, & the Irvine Chair of Anthropology at the Cal Academy of Sciences. (Smithsonian photograph of **Canadian Inuit peoples**) Text from **Todd Braje**.



JIM STEELE BIRD SONG WALK at SPVP: **Meet at Visitor Center on Sat, APRIL 27, 8am**



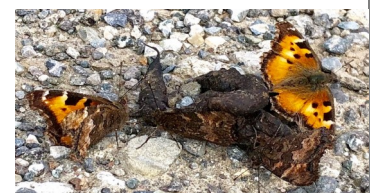
Greggt Thompson

Bring binoculars in addition to quiet listening skills. **Jim** will play recordings to help you hear the challenging answers of males defending their territories. He will help you classify the calls & songs of other **birds** along the Trout Farm & Weiler Trails. Meet at the V.C.

ON THE TRAIL

Laurie Nikitas stopped to look at & capture a view of a group of **Tortoiseshell butterflies** as they partook of a delectable feast that any **house fly** would envy. "Came across these guys 1/28, around noon, just before the far bridge on Weiler, getting their essential minerals. There are four Tortoiseshells visible. "

(Continued on page 4)



NEW TALENT COMES TO THE FRIENDS OF SPVP

First, in the form of 2 members of our Visitor Center Staff, **Lakshmi Javadekar** and **Jayesh Kapoor**. This bright couple who loves the Park, has plans to place the most recent newsletter on our web site, and perhaps newsletter archives, as well as updating some areas, continuing with the work **Bing Huey** and **Jim Steele** began on bringing the website to life.



Another new talent hails from the Pacifica Historical Society, **Enid Ansgarius**; she has joined our team as secretary of our organization and was at the maiden meeting of the new president of our group, our super diligent clever organizer, **Mila Stroganoff**. Our new vice pres. is **Judy Bacon**, while **Adrian Stroganoff** is new to the demanding job of membership dir. that our former pres. **Jim Steele** soldiered through for several yrs. Jim has gone on to other endeavors, such as writing a column for the Pacifica Tribune, but he has said that he is still ready and willing to continue his popular bird song walks. We want to thank Jim for helping to transition Adrian, Lakshmi and Jayesh into their new jobs. All will be formally presented at the short membership meeting on March 16.

VALLEY VIEW RAIN, FLOODING KEPT AT BAY

by **Joseph Piro**

Our first Trail Day of 2019 brought two newcomers -- **Lindsey Bourgeois** and **Bobby**. They joined Park Aide **Tim Cook**, **Istvan Puski** and me to work on drain dips on the eastern end of the Valley View Trail. There was also a big trail run in the Park that day, so that made work a little trickier than usual, but we still managed to spruce up a lot of drains. We made it up to the top of the ridge and decided to continue, so we made a nice loop back to the horseshoe pits near start of the Weiler Ranch Road. Though it was pleasantly sunny that day, there was rain returning in the next few days so it was good timing for this work. Here's to another year of happy hiking!



Wow! The Storage Room!

Room!! Space! New cabinet! Organization!

Not sure how this all got started, but **Mila Stroganoff** asked the rangers to take away an old refrigerator, and said that we needed a new cabinet and then, & then.... **Voila!**

The rangers went to work. We have a new cabinet that closes. A wall was taken out so we have an easier time getting the chairs in & out. **Ranger Greg Escoto** organized the shelves with a little of my help. Some boxes were actually empty, so those went. All in all it was a wonderful effort.

Our heartfelt thanks to all the rangers who worked on this project!!

Judy Bacon, in behalf of "The Friends"

LEADING A CHILD INTO OUR WILD WORLD

Focus on **Lee and Laurie Nikitas**

Laurie Nikitas, grandmother of 2: **Daphne**, 1½ and **Lee**, 3½ years old, took Lee out on his first long Valley View Trail hike. "He instinctively knew how to act around little animals. He squatted down, clasped his hands and quieted his voice, so he got to observe **lizards** and a **Crescent butterfly** up close. It was amazing. On the way down he asked me to stop and when I asked why he said, 'Just stop, Grammie', and he started looking around and up into the trees. We stopped several times at his behest, just to look around. He's been talking about it ever since. Starting to teach him plants. So far he really wants to see '**poisonous oak**', so he knows for sure where it is. Can't wait to do it again."



Laurie Nikitas

All Invited to Join Work Day & BBQ

The Rotary Club of Pacifica in along with Park staff & the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park is conducting a work day in the park. The event will be on **Sun, March 10, from 11am to ~2pm**. There will be a pot luck BBQ after the event at the Visitor Center. There will be work planned for more active volunteers (ex: trail maintenance) & less active volunteers (ex: planting). Email **Carl Schwab** at : pakcarl1111@comcast.net if you plan to attend so the park rangers can have enough tools and supplies available. If you need have questions, contact me at the above email or at 650-355-8563.

Carl Schwab,
President, Rotary Club, Pacifica



MY LIFE in NATURE: SUSAN HERRING, Friend of SPVP



A couple years ago when I started volunteering at the VC Carolyn asked me to write about My Life in Nature. Long story; here goes: my life in nature started before I was born in Tennessee. My parents bought land on one of the TVA lakes - Watts Bar (below: Watts Bar at sunset).



They started building a cedar log cabin the year I was born, which they named Cedarscent. My mom would heat my bottle over the fire in a black iron pot. We spent glorious times there.

My folks built paths through the woods - they had a 2-handed cross-cut saw (a lot of cooperation). Dad built piers in both the cove, which was deep water, and the point where it was shallow. We found lots of broken pottery there, so there must have been many fights before the dams and people were forced to move. Mom taught all 3 of us kids to swim; my younger sister could swim before she could walk. They taught us responsibility: there was a paper plate chore chart Mom made so every one had daily chores.

They invited so many people to join us at Cedarscent - relatives, friends, Senior High Fellowship, Girl Scouts, et al. We had lots of boats - 2 sailboats (1 my dad built), rowboat,



canoe (with sail attachment - it could fly through the water) and motor boat. One of my fondest memories is all of us going in the canoe (when we were very young) at night on a full moon, and seeing the moon on the water was such a

thrill (still gives me a thrill). You had to be careful when you went sailing, because at 5:00 the wind would drop, so you better not be across the lake then. I was once, & knew I was in trouble. I got off the sailfish and started swimming it. Dad came in the motor boat to rescue me (I didn't do that again). One solace: our cabin was in the **pine woods**, so the sound of the wind would lull you to sleep at night. Bliss.

There were **blackberries**, but they were full of **chiggers** - so you had to jump in the lake before they could burrow under your skin. Dad would make ice cream with a hand churner. We had no phone, radio or tv. So it was all nature, games & books. There was a log book we wrote in every time we were there, inviting guests to write as well. Everyone had to rest for an hour after lunch; you could read or

talk as long as you were quiet. We swam twice a day, but if you forgot to hang your swim suit, you missed your next swim. Mom planned our menus so well, and brought everything we needed for the weekend or the week, as there was only a little store which didn't have much.

Granddad would barbecue for July 4th, or make chicken pileau (pronounced purlew) in a black iron pot, where the rice stuck to the bottom and got all crusty.

When we were old enough we could sleep on the pier at the point and watch the stars and meteors. We'd have fireworks out there on July 4th. When we were first there, you had to be careful you didn't put your shoes on before checking for **scorpions** (they liked the dark cool). We had the girls' room with 4 bunk beds, 2 of which folded and hooked to the wall. The boys slept upstairs, and there was a ladder that swung down with a sand bag on a pulley. Clever. Mom & Dad usually slept on the screened porch for the cool breeze. What a life! (More on Susan's life in nature in our May/June newsletter)

We Introduce our New Board

The presentation of the new Directors for the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park will be held on March 16th, 2019, at the Annual Meeting at 3:30 PM at the Visitor Center (see below). We will keep this group of 10 directors for one year. If we have a volunteer for a qualified Treasurer or Director of the Trailside Store, there will be a formal addition at our Board Meeting, 4/8.

Enid Ansgarius
Judy Bacon
Bing Huey
Lakshmi Javadekar

Carolyn Pankow
Istvan Puski
Adrian Stroganoff
Mila Stroganoff

DR. TOM PARKER HITS A HOME RUN FOR OUR CHAPARRAL AND TIDAL WETLANDS

Never have I heard such a clear presentation of how climate change is affecting two of our prominent ecosystems in California. Apparently, in the future much of California's chaparral will burn too frequently to replace itself, not only because of human-caused ignitions, as our population grows, but with the longer wildfire seasons and higher temperatures of human-caused climate change. Although chaparral makes up only 6-9% of California by area, it contains a quarter of the species found in the Calif. Floristic Province; it's a global biodiversity hotspot; replacement stress = loss of diversity of plants & wildlife.



Dr. Parker elucidated for me the projection of future rainfall in California, telling us how climate change will most probably result in the same rainfall fluctuations that we've always had; it's the increased temperature that will make periodic droughts more stressful and challenging to our flora.

Another big take away for me, was that the tidal wetlands of the Bay Area will be stressed by the influx of salt water from the projected rise of ocean levels, & because the brackish and fresher water areas contain the greatest amount of endemic species (those found only in Calif.) & the greatest biodiversity, more critical species will be lost. (above, right: the endemic **salt marsh harvest mouse**)

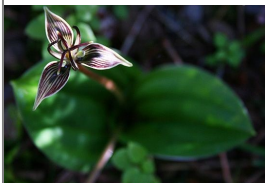




ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Katie Antista saw a **grey fox** in the path through our native sun garden in late January; it was rushing back toward the creek area.

It's very hard for a **bobcat** to keep out of **Ms. Antista's** view, and in late December she spied a fellow in the South Walnut picnic area, that great hunting ground full of **gophers, quail** and **brush rabbits**.



Who can resist looking in Feb for the 1st **fetid adder's tongue** (left)? Yes, on the eastern side of the Hazelnut trail as **Katie** reports. **Giant trilliums** were starting on the Plaskon trail. (.conifercountry.com)

Walter Colquhoun

said that he & **Paul Jones** saw a 2 ft. long steelhead at the large back bridge of the Weiler on Jan. 21! Let's protect it!



DISCOVERY

"Chloroplasts may seem like docile farmers of light. But inside these microscopic plant & algal cell structures lurks the spirit of a warrior."

When a **pathogen** attacks a **plant**, **chloroplasts** stop making food from sunlight & **rush to the site of infection to help fend off the invader**. Plant pathologist **Tolga Bozkurt's** group tracked & tested a protein called "chloroplast unusual positioning 1" or CHUP1 (and gene), & found it was behind much of this killing activity of a notorious fungus. The photo shows (yellow) chloroplasts & the (purple) haustoria of the **Phytophthora infestans**, potato famine culprit.

Source: *ScienceNews*.

ISTVAN, RANGERS, 4H MEMBERS, PLANT TREES IN PARK

More beautiful trees in our Park; these are some of the native trees this team planted on Jan. 19: **Coast live oaks, toyon**



(left), **alder** and the shrubby, red-barked **brittle leaf manzanita**, as well as a **big-leaf maple** (below: Calscape photo), certainly a native in Butano State Park. I

believe that the maples were planted near the utility entrance road, rather near the creek.



CALENDAR FOR MARCH/APRIL, 2019

MARCH TRAIL DAYS

Saturday, March 9.....9am

FRIENDS of SPVP MARCH BOARD MEETING

Monday, March 11.....7pm

MARCH HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, March 16.....9am

GENERAL MEETING FOR 2019

Saturday, March 16.....3:30pm

TODD BRAJE'S ROUTING AMERICANS TO A NEW WORLD

Saturday, March 16.....5pm

BRIAN FISHER'S ANTS EVERYWHERE

Saturday, March 30.....5pm

FRIENDS OF SPVP APRIL BOARD MEETING

Monday, April 8.....7pm

APRIL TRAIL DAYS

Saturday, April 13.....9am

BAY AREA WILD LIVE ANIMALS FOR KIDS

Thursday, April 18.....1pm

JIM STEELE BIRD SONG WALK

Saturday, April 27.....8am

APRIL HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, April 20.....9am

For all events except Board Mtg, meet at Visitor Center.

For Board Mtg, contact Mila Stroganoff (650) 359-1642

LOVE SAN PEDRO CREEK? LOVE STEELHEAD?

Here is your opportunity to get involved with San Pedro Valley Creek and help maintain our native **Steelhead** habitat! The San Pedro Valley Creek Watershed Coalition is a group of volunteers who are not only passionate about the creek but also are motivated to improve its habitat. As many know **Steelhead Trout** are native to our creek, so all efforts help their survival. Also, restoration work improves the environment along the creek, benefitting the community & property owners. The Watershed Coalition partners with the San Pedro Valley Park and the City of Pacifica along with other organizations. A number of the Friends of SPVP are also Watershed Coalition volunteers. Check out our website: <http://www.pedrocreek.org>. For more information or if you want to get involved, contact Paul Jones, SPVCWC President, pauljonessailor@gmail.com.



Sharron Walker

The Leaders of "the Friends of SPVP": President: **Mila Stroganoff**; Vice President: **Judy Bacon**; Secretary: **Enid Ansgarius**; Interim Treasurer: **Bing Huey**; Visitor Center Director: **Mila Stroganoff**; Habitat Restoration leader: **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader: **Joseph Piro**; Membership: **Adrian Stroganoff**; CoProgram Directors: **Mila Stroganoff, Carolyn Pankow**; Director of Hospitality: **Judy Bacon**; Directors of Website Management: **Lakshmi Javadekar and Jayesh Kapoor**; Trailside Store Director: **open**; Membership misc: **Katie Antista**.

WEB SITE: friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org Editor of this newsletter: **Carolyn Pankow**; Letters to the Editor: pankowinca@gmail.com (also, if you are interested in submitting an article or photo, please email Carolyn)

SILENT DRAMA ON A FIELD OFF THE WEILER RANCH ROAD by *RON WILSON*



COUGAR CONCERNS: “Don’t worry I’ve got your back”, “And I’ve got your back too”.

“ALL THAT REMAINS” by RON WILSON



MAYBE A COYOTE’S QUAIL AL FRESCO?

**RON WILSON’S
PATTERNS
IN
NATURE**

Jan 27 on the Weiler



RON WILSON'S NATURE IN JANUARY



Seed plumes of coyote brush and dandelion dropping into an unknown fungus on Jan. 27, 2019; Weiler Ranch Rd.

Bing Huey's California Scrub Jay on Coyote Brush



Weiler Ranch Rd. on the 13th of January, 2019

Bing's

Cladonia

Cup

Lichen



Hazelnut Trail

December 9,

2018

BING HUEY'S SILK TASSELS,
Garrya elliptica, MALE AND
 FEMALE FLOWERS, which
 grow on separate plants
 (dioecious)



Internet photo of male



Internet photo of female



Lovely pollen-laden male anthers on
 the male tassel above: January 13,
 2019
 Hazelnut Trail

Sticky red stigmas poke out on the
 female tassels at left,
 ready to accept pollen?: February 2,
 2019
 Brooks Creek Trail

4H CLUB Plants trees in SPVP—January 19, 2019 Habitat Restoration Day



How many shovels manned by how many kids does it take to plant a tree? Istvan was amazed. Ranger Tom Hart and Ranger Greg Escoto (photographer) and Istvan supervised the excavations and the gentle placing of each tree into its new earthen home.

